

Alliance District Plan Checklist and Review Criteria

This Review Guide is intended to help districts ensure that they have fully completed the application and have presented a Plan that will improve student performance and narrow the achievement gap. The CSDE will also use this Review Guide to provide feedback to Alliance Districts in an iterative process before final approval.

Please note that the central and most important criterion for Alliance District Plan approval is whether the application makes a compelling case that the strategies described will improve student achievement and address the achievement gap.

Section 1: Overall District Improvement Strategy and Budget

a. Completion Checklist

	Y	N
Cover Sheet		
Did the district fully complete the application cover sheet?		
Did the district indicate when the plan was approved by the local board of education?		
Overall Strategy and Key Reform Initiatives: Narrative Questions		
Did the district provide a narrative overall approach to improving student performance and closing the achievement gap?		
Did the district describe the rationale for selecting their reform initiatives, including student data and evidence-based initiatives?		
Did the district list the multi-year, measurable performance targets that will be used to gauge student success?		
Did the district describe how it will monitor student outcomes to track progress towards performance targets?		
Did the district describe how it will monitor adult action indicators to track progress towards performance targets?		
Did the district demonstrate how the reform initiatives will interact/coordinate with other resources?		
Did the district provide a list of the relevant stakeholders it consulted regarding the implementation of the Alliance District Plan with a brief description of the input received from each group?		
Key District Initiatives		
Did the district provide 3-8 individual reform initiatives that the district will undertake in the next five years?		
For each reform initiative, did the district indicate whether the reform is an existing program or planned through the Alliance District process?		
For each initiative, did the district provide a description of the initiative, including the purpose of the planned activities and their underlying rationale?		
For each initiative, did the district indicate whether the initiative is drawn from the menu of reform options provided in this application?		
For each proposed expanded existing reform, did the district indicate whether that existing reform has led to increases in student performance in the past?		
If a proposed expanded existing reform has led to increases in student performance, did the district describe the extent of the improvement using supporting data?		

If a proposed expanded existing reform has not led to increases in student performance in the past, did the district describe how the current proposal differs from previous efforts, and why it is likely to succeed where the previous effort did not?		
For each initiative, did the district provide multi-year, measurable performance targets that will be used to gauge success?		
For each initiative, did the district indicate the short-term metrics that will be used to measure interim progress?		
For each initiative, did the district list the implementation steps the district will take over the next five years?		
For any initiative beginning in the 2012-13 school year, did the district describe the implementation steps for Year One in greater detail?		
For each initiative, did the district indicate the years of implementation by checking the appropriate boxes?		
For each initiative, did the district indicate whether it plans to use conditional Alliance District funding for the initiative?		

Section 1: Overall District Improvement Strategy and Budget

b. Approval Criteria

	Y	N	Suggestions for Improvement
Overall			
Do the district's key initiatives fit together to create a coherent and comprehensive overall strategy?			
Are the key initiatives tailored to the needs of the district, its schools, and its students?			
Is the district's plan for developing and implementing key strategies likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction for students?			
For each Key Initiative proposed:			
Are the performance targets linked to student achievement (where possible), measurable, ambitious, and achievable?			
Are the five-year implementation steps likely to result in the district meeting the proposed performance targets?			
Does the district's monitoring process accurately track progress toward the performance targets?			
Does the budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequately fund the proposed initiatives? allocate funds effectively and efficiently and, where possible, combine Alliance District funding with other resources? 			

Section 2: Differentiated School Interventions

a. Completion Checklist

	Y	N
Tiered Approach to School Improvement		
Did the district list all of its Turnaround, Focus, and Review schools in the Requires Most Significant Support/Oversight section?		
For any tier in which the district placed schools, did the district provide classification criteria for that tier?		
For any tier in which the district placed schools, did the district provide an overall strategy for that tier?		
Phase I – Focus Schools (2012-13 School Year)		
For each Focus School, did the district provide a school redesign plan with interventions that begin in the 2012-13 school year?		
For each Focus School, did the district diagnose the areas of greatest need in the school, as informed by assessment data and qualitative assessments?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe and provide evidence for the reasons for performance in the school?		
For each Focus School, did the district explain how it will measure the success of the intervention?		
For each Focus School, did the district explain how it will monitor school progress?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe the actions it will take to provide strong school leadership?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe the actions it will take to ensure that teachers are effective and able to deliver high-quality instruction?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe the actions it will take to redesign the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe the actions it will take to strengthen the school's instructional program, and align it with the Common Core State Standards?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe the actions it will take to use data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe the actions it will take to establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addresses other non-academic factors?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe the actions it will take to provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement?		
For each Focus School, did the district describe how much funding will be made available for the interventions in the Focus School?		
For each Focus School, did the district list the sources of funding that will be used for the intervention in the Focus School?		
Phase II: Subset of other low performing schools (2013-14 School Year)		
For schools designated as Review Schools, did the district list the subset of schools that will be part of the Phase II cohort?		
Did the district provide a plan for how it will support Phase II schools as they		

examine data to select areas of focus for improvement?		
For Phase II schools, did the district name the assessment tool it will use to address: quality of leadership, quality of instruction, curriculum, use of data, use of time, school climate, and partnerships with parents and the community?		
For Phase II schools, did the district designate which person(s) will be responsible for conducting the needs assessment?		
For Phase II schools, did the district describe how it will provide support for the schools in the goal-setting process?		
For Phase II schools, did the district recommend interventions?		
For Phase II schools, did the district describe how it will ensure that schools select appropriate interventions that are likely to lead to increased student performance?		
For Phase II schools, did the district describe how it will support schools in the development of comprehensive implementation plans?		
For Phase II schools, did the district demonstrate how it will monitor schools to ensure that interventions are implemented with fidelity?		
For Phase II schools, did the district demonstrate how it will monitor if interventions lead to increases in student achievement?		
For Phase II schools, did the district provide a timeline to ensure that School Redesign plans are completed by June 2013?		

Section 2: Differentiated School Interventions

b. Approval Criteria

	Y	N	Suggestions for Improvement
Overall:			
Is the district's plan for developing and implementing a system of differentiated accountability and support likely to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction for students?			
Are the district's differentiated interventions tailored to the specific needs of its schools and students?			
For each Phase I Focus School redesign plan:			
Does the Focus School redesign plan propose interventions that are based on the needs of students and likely to improve the performance of low-performing students and subgroups and reduce achievement gaps among subgroups?			
Is the degree of change in the proposed redesign plans sufficient to lead to significant and sustained increases in student learning?			
Are the proposed interventions tailored to the needs of students in the school, especially the grade levels, subgroups, and subject areas identified as the areas of greatest need?			
For Phase II process:			
Is the district's plan for supporting schools through the processes of diagnosis, goal-setting, and selection, implementation, and monitoring of interventions likely to result in the development of high quality redesign plans for Phase II schools that will be ready for implementation in 2013-14?			

Section 3: Budget

a. Completion Checklist

Did the district use the Key Initiative Budget Summary to provide a high-level budget the funding the district will allocate to each key initiative described in Section B?		
For each initiative in the Key Initiative Budget Summary, did the district provide the existing resources and, if applicable, the Alliance District funding to be allocated to the initiative?		
For each key initiative that will be launched or expanded with Alliance District funding, did the district provide a separate line-by-line budget that details the uses of the Alliance District funding for 2012-13?		
For each key initiative that will use Alliance District funding, did the district indicate the total Alliance District funding it anticipates allocating to the initiative in years two through five?		
Does the total of the key initiative budgets equal a substantial majority of the Alliance District funding allocated to the district?		
If the district proposes using any Alliance District funds for purposes other than new reforms or expanding existing reform initiatives, did it provide a line-by-line budget for that purpose for 2012-13?		
If the district proposes using any Alliance District funds for purposes other than new reforms or the expansion of existing reforms, did it attach an operating budget for 2012-13?		
If the district needed to attach an operating budget, did it also include a one page summary explaining the need for any expenditure not allocated to the initiation or expansion of reform initiatives?		
Did the district provide an ED114 budget that includes all Alliance District funding expenditures?		

b. Approval Criteria

	Y	N	Suggestions for Improvement
Overall:			
Did the district budget propose allocating a substantive majority of Alliance District funds to the initiation of new reform initiatives or the expansion of existing reform initiatives?			
If the district proposed using any Alliance District funds for any other purpose, are the proposed expenditures necessary to improve student achievement?			